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My name is Christine O'Grady, I am a home visitor through the Children's Trust Fund's Family School Connection at Bielefield School. Previous to this I was the Parent Leadership Coordinator for Middlesex County.

I oppose the governor's proposed cuts to children's programs as it pertains to the commission on children, the parent trust, Care4kids and children's trust fund programs.

As we all know CT has the largest achievement and poverty gaps in the nation. Eliminating or diminishing this essential agency and proven programs will absolutely lead to an irreversible widening of the country's largest achievement and poverty gaps.

Without appropriate preventative social services through the Children's Trust fund, families will rely more on reactionary and intervention services such as TANF, food stamps and Department of Children and Families Mandatory Services. You will see more children removed from their home and fewer children ready to learn in school. You may have the best curriculum and the best teachers on the face of the planet, but if a child is cold, abused, hungry or behaviorally challenged, nothing is going to work to keep this child on a proficient or even a goal level. Fewer children will make it to preschool. Fewer children will be reading on goal by third grade. Data shows that children who do not attend preschool or have low reading scores in third grade are more likely to end up in jail as adults.

Without the Parent Trust families will not learn to advocate for themselves and their families. Neighborhoods will become less safe and parents will shrink from civic engagement. The Parent Trust Funds so many important initiatives that let adults advocate for children and families other than their own. Parents form coalitions and solve neighborhood and community problems resulting in less use of local and state systems. Without the commission on children, organizations such as Parent Leadership Training Institute and School Readiness Councils would not be here. The Commission on Children has a phenomenal track record for bringing dollars into the state. This year the commission raised \$9.25 million which went to SNAP recipients. This is 22 times the commission's desperately reduced budget. You, the legislature, need their expertise. You need to have the Commission there so you are making informed choices regarding the fate of Connecticut families.

I believe it is a great political ploy on the governor's office to keep poking the same agencies over in a hope that they will rollover. But these proposed budget cuts couldn't have missed the mark any further and have created ire for people trying to help those in need.